services, improved marketing facilities and subsidiary income opportunities through horticulture, livestock, dairying, fisheries, etc. For alleviating the hardships caused to debt stressed families of farmers in the affected districts, ex-gratia assistance from Prime Ministers National Relief Fund (PMNRF) will also be provided. In addition to state and local implementation and monitoring mechanisms, the Prime Minister's Office will monitor implementation of the package of relief measures.

The package in respect of the six districts in the Vidarbha region of Maharasthra, namely, Akola, Wardha, Amaravati, Buldhana, Wasim, & Yavatmal has been announced recently.

Packages for families of farmers committed suicides

410.SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Hon'ble Prime Minister has announced huge packages to help the families of the farmers who committed suicides;

(b) whether these packages and help would be extended to the other States like Andhra Pradesh where farmers suicide is a phenomena; and

(c) whether this is going to solve the agrarian crisis in our country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) A special package for mitigating the stress of farmers for the six districts of Vidarbha region of Maharasthra, namely, Wardha, Yevatmal, Amravati, Akola, Buldana, and Washim, was announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister during his visit of the region from 30th June to 1st July, 2006. The package aims at establishing a sustainable and viable farming and livelihood support system through debt relief to farmers, improved supply of institutional credit, crop centric approach to agriculture, assured irrigation facilities, watershed management, better extension and farming support services, improved marketing facilities and subsidiary income opportunities through horticulture, livestock, dairying, fisheries, etc.

Similar package would be extended to the identified districts in the States of Andhra Pradesh. Karnataka and Kerala.

The implementation of the package is expected to mitigate the distress condition of farmers.

Problems of small and marginal farmers

†411.SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the existing agriculture policy has added to the problems being faced by farmers especially small and marginal farmers;

(b) whether it is also a fact that despite the slogan "Second Green Revolution" by Government, incidents of suicides by farmers have increased;

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(d) if not, the details of efforts being made by Government to save farmers from dept particularly from money lenders, State-wise; and

(e) how far public sector banks are accountable for the suicide of farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) Government is implementing a number of schemes for development of the agriculture sector. The strategies formulated, *inter alia,* include (i) enhancing institutional credit flow to the farmers and strengthening of cooperative credit structure; (ii) ensuring the timely availability of quality inputs; (iii) promoting farmer friendly, demand drive agriculture extension system; (iv) accelerating diversification to high value crops including horticulture activities; (v) strengthening infrastructure and the supply chain; (vi) optimizing the efficient utilization of available water resources through micro irrigation and enhancing the sustainability of dry-land/rain fed farming system; (vii) reforming agricultural markets, and widespread use of post harvest technology; and (viii) putting in place a broader spectrum of risk management apparatus for farmers. The focus of agriculture credit policy is on progressive institutionalization for providing timely and adequate credit support to farmers with particular focus on small and marginal

†Originai notice of the question was received in Hindi.